

the many contributions that local auxiliary posts make to our veterans, our community, our state and our nation.

From drafting the original document that would later become the first GI Bill to the ongoing "We Believe Campaign" highlighting the positive impacts that veterans make on their communities, the American Legion continues its essential work to support our veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Commander Rohan and the 2.3 million members of the American Legion as they meet to convene their 100th national convention in the place where it all started, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981 TO DESEGREGATE THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 70th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman's commitment to desegregate the Armed Forces of our great nation.

It is my belief that the "Equality of Treatment and Opportunity; Executive Order 9981" was an indelible demarcation in the ever-present battle to eradicate racial discrimination within American society. Moreover, the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum will be hosting an event on Thursday, July 26 to honor this groundbreaking step towards equality as well as Truman's other efforts to expand rights for African American citizens. As the U.S. Representative of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, it gives me great pride and joy to praise both President Truman for his valiant and just actions and the Truman Library for hosting such a noteworthy event within my district.

Born and raised in the state of Missouri, President Truman was a man of remarkable character and ambition. Although he was born less than twenty years after the abolishment of slavery, in a time immersed in significant racial ramifications, the former president advanced civil rights in the United States. One prominent example of the trailblazing legacy President Truman left behind is the issuance of Executive Orders 9980 and 9981 to desegregate the Armed Forces and federal workforce. As an individual who has actively sought to further expand and build upon this legacy, it is truly an honor to join the Truman Library in celebrating the 70th anniversary of such an impactful milestone.

Today, the United States Armed Forces encompass four diverse and heterogeneous branches of brave, selfless, and upstanding servicemen and women. Prior to this Executive Order, African American members of the military had different rules than other servicemembers, which often delayed their entry to combat. Although other servicemembers could begin their combat training in the months following their initial qualifications, most African Americans were forced to wait four years to begin training.

Since the founding of our country, African Americans and other individuals of color actively participated in the Armed Forces; however, intentionally attempting to separate or delay this participation was also a perpetual occurrence within the military. President Truman's issuance of the Executive Order of 1948 was the directive that officially and completely abolished this practice.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981. The courageous actions taken by President Truman to eliminate racial discrimination within America's armed forces are a true display of leadership and a legacy that will live on for generations to come. Furthermore, it is my hope that we will honor our only president from Missouri by continuing the effort to end racial discrimination in American society once and for all.